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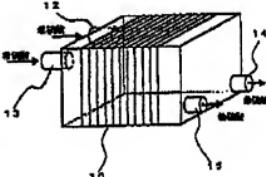
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(54) REGENERATION METHOD FOR SOLID POLYELECTROLYTE FUEL CELL

(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To regenerate a solid polyelectrolyte fuel cell having a deteriorated cell characteristic by accumulating cation in a solid polyelectrolyte film.

SOLUTION: The operation for power generation is stopped. Dilute sulfuric acid is then supplied from the anode gas feed hole 12 and the cathode gas feed hole 13 in a fuel cell stack 10 through the internal gas flow line and reaches the solid polyelectrolyte film for acid treatment, so that proton displaces the accumulated cation. After the acid treatment, pure water is supplied from the anode gas feed hole 12 and the cathode gas feed hole 13 for cleaning, and nitrogen gas is supplied for drying.



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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1]A regeneration method of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell recovering a battery characteristic which fell by long-term operation by carrying out acid cleaning of the membrane electrode zygote included in a fuel cell stack.

[Claim 2]A regeneration method of the polymer electrolyte fuel cell according to claim 1 performing acid cleaning of a membrane electrode zygote by immersing a membrane electrode zygote which disassembled and took out a fuel cell stack into inorganic acid liquid.

[Claim 3]Inside of an anode gas feed hopper which suspends operation of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell and supplies fuel gas to a fuel cell stack, and a cathode gas feed hopper which supplies oxidant gas, A regeneration method of the polymer electrolyte fuel cell according to claim 1 supplying inorganic acid liquid and performing acid cleaning of a membrane electrode zygote from one of gas supplying ports at least.

[Claim 4]While connecting piping for inorganic acid liquid supply with gas supplying pipelines which supply fuel gas to an anode gas feed hopper of a fuel cell stack, and gas supplying pipelines which supply oxidant gas to a cathode gas feed hopper via a valve, To gas discharge piping which discharges gas from an anode, and gas discharge piping which discharges gas from a cathode. Connect piping for inorganic acid liquid discharge via a valve, and the aforementioned valve is switched. Inorganic acid liquid introduced from piping for inorganic acid liquid supply is led to an inside of a fuel cell stack from a gas supplying port, A regeneration method of the polymer electrolyte fuel cell according to claim 3 performing acid cleaning of a membrane electrode zygote using a method of leading to piping for inorganic acid liquid discharge, and furthermore discharging outside from gas discharge piping.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to the regeneration method of the membrane electrode zygote included in the fuel cell stack of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] Drawing 4 is drawing of longitudinal section showing typically the basic constitution of the single cell of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell. The catalyst bed 3 is stuck to both sides of the solid polyelectrolyte membrane 2, the membrane electrode zygote (MEA) 1 is formed, the gas diffusion layer 4 is further allotted to the outside, it inserts with the anode side separator 5 and the cathode side separator 6, and the single cell is constituted. The fuel gas which contains hydrogen in this composition in the fuel gas flow route 7 with which the anode side separator 5 was equipped, Oxidant gas, such as oxygen or air, is passed to the oxidant gas passage 8 with which the cathode side separator 6 was equipped, and power generation by electrochemical reaction is performed by sending to the membrane electrode zygote 1 through the gas diffusion layer 4.

[0003] Since membranous specific resistance becomes small and a film functions as a proton conductivity electrolyte membrane in a polymer electrolyte fuel cell by carrying out the water of the solid polyelectrolyte membrane 2 to saturation, in order to maintain the generation efficiency of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell highly, it is required to include sufficient water for the solid polyelectrolyte membrane 2. For this reason, it humidifies with the humidifier which equipped the inside of the exterior or a cell with the oxidant gas passed to the fuel gas passed to the fuel gas flow route 7 and/or, the oxidant gas passage 8. The method of maintaining the conductivity of the solid polyelectrolyte membrane 2 is conventionally taken by supplying the gas holding suitable moisture.

[0004]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] Thus, in the polymer electrolyte fuel cell, by humidifying and supplying fuel gas and/or, oxidant gas, the conductivity of solid polyelectrolyte membrane was maintained and the predetermined battery characteristic has been obtained. However, since the positive ion dissolved in underwater [which is used for humidification] or the positive ion eluted from piping will be sent to a membrane electrode zygote with reactant gas when these reactant gas is humidified and supplied with a humidifier in this way, The proton group which bears the conductivity of solid polyelectrolyte membrane gradually with progress of operation time is replaced, and there is a problem that a battery characteristic falls.

[0005] This invention was made in consideration of the problem of such a polymer electrolyte fuel cell, a positive ion accumulates the purpose of this invention to solid polyelectrolyte membrane, and it is in providing the regeneration method which reproduces effectively the polymer electrolyte fuel cell with which the battery characteristic fell to the cell provided with the predetermined battery characteristic.

[0006]

[Means for Solving the Problem] In this invention in order to attain the above-mentioned purpose, (1) By carrying out acid cleaning of the membrane electrode zygotes included in a fuel cell stack, it uses recovering a battery characteristic which fell by long-term operation, and (2), for example, a fuel cell stack is disassembled, take out a membrane electrode zygote, and it is immersed into inorganic acid liquid, and perform acid cleaning. Or suspend operation of (3) polymer electrolyte fuel cells, and it is supposed that inorganic acid liquid is supplied and acid cleaning of a membrane electrode zygote is performed from one of gas supplying ports at least among an anode gas feed hopper which supplies fuel gas to a fuel cell stack, and a cathode gas

feed hopper which supplies oxidant gas. (4) For example, while connecting piping for inorganic acid liquid supply with gas supplying pipelines which supply fuel gas to an anode gas feed hopper of a fuel cell stack, and gas supplying pipelines which supply oxidant gas to a cathode gas feed hopper via a valve, Piping for inorganic acid liquid discharge is connected with gas discharge piping which discharges gas from an anode, and gas discharge piping which discharges gas from a cathode via a valve, acid cleaning of a membrane electrode zygote is performed using a method of switching these valves, leading inorganic acid liquid introduced from piping for inorganic acid liquid supply from a gas supplying port to an inside of a fuel cell stack, leading to piping for inorganic acid liquid discharge from gas discharge piping further, and discharging outside — things are done.

[0007]If disassemble a fuel cell stack to which battery characteristic fell, for example like the above (2), a membrane electrode zygote is taken out, it is immersed into inorganic acid liquid and acid cleaning is performed by long-term operation, a positive ion accumulated to solid polyelectrolyte membrane will be again replaced by proton. Therefore, if a fuel cell stack is constituted using a membrane electrode zygote which carried out acid cleaning in this way, it will be reproduced to a polymer electrolyte fuel cell which has a predetermined battery characteristic.

[0008]the above (3) — as shown in (4) of further the above then, inorganic acid liquid is sent to a membrane electrode zygote through a channel of a channel of fuel gas and/or, oxidant gas, and a positive ion accumulated to solid polyelectrolyte membrane is again replaced by a proton, and is reproduced. By this, the battery characteristic of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell will be recovered to the predetermined characteristic. Therefore, if these methods are used, it can reproduce to a polymer electrolyte fuel cell which has a predetermined battery characteristic, without disassembling a fuel cell stack.

[0009]

[Embodiment of the Invention]<Working example 1> By prolonged generating operation, the fuel cell stack of the polymer electrolyte fuel cell with which the battery characteristic fell was disassembled, all of the membrane electrode zygote of ten laminated single cells were taken out, it was immersed into dilute sulfuric acid, and acid treatment was performed. It dried, after pure water washed the membrane electrode zygote which ended acid treatment, and it included in the fuel cell stack again, generating operation was performed on the same conditions as the original operating condition, and the battery characteristic was evaluated.

[0010]Drawing 1 is a characteristic figure showing the battery characteristic of the polymer electrolyte fuel cell after acid treatment implementation as compared with the battery characteristic before acid treatment implementation. The characteristic A shown by — in the figure is the final characteristic at the time of performing prolonged generating operation, and the characteristic B shown by O is a battery characteristic after acid treatment implementation. As for the characteristic B, as compared with the characteristic A, an extensive improvement is found so that clearly from a figure. This characteristic B is almost equivalent to the original battery characteristic of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell, and it turns out that it recovered mostly to the original battery characteristic by the above-mentioned acid treatment.

[0011]<Working example 2> The generating operation of the polymer electrolyte fuel cell to which the battery characteristic fell by prolonged generating operation is suspended. As shown in drawing 2, after supplying dilute sulfuric acid and carrying out conduction of the gas passageway inside the fuel cell stack 10 from the anode gas feed hopper 12 and the cathode gas feed hopper 13 of the fuel cell stack 10, it discharged from the anode gas outlet 14 and the cathode gas outlet 15, respectively. Next, after pouring in the pure water for washing and carrying out conduction of the internal gas passageway similarly from the anode gas feed hopper 12 and the cathode gas feed hopper 13, it discharged from the anode gas outlet 14 and the cathode gas outlet 15, respectively. Then, conduction of the nitrogen gas was carried out to the anode gas outlet 14 and the cathode gas outlet 15, and it was made to dry similarly from the anode gas feed hopper 12 and the cathode gas feed hopper 13.

[0012]According to the result of having performed generating operation, about the polymer electrolyte fuel cell which performed acid treatment by dilute sulfuric acid, washing by pure water, and desiccation by nitrogen gas like the above. It improved like the characteristic shown in drawing 1 of working example 1 more nearly substantially than the characteristic before a battery characteristic processes, and the characteristic almost equivalent to the original battery characteristic was obtained. Although conduction of the dilute sulfuric acid is carried out and acid treatment is performed in this example from the both sides of the anode gas feed hopper

12 and the cathode gas feed hopper 13. Since dilute sulfuric acid is diffused also as supplying dilute sulfuric acid from one of gas supplying ports and it reaches to solid polyelectrolyte membrane, solid polyelectrolyte membrane is reproduced and a battery characteristic is recovered.

[0013] Working example 3 drawing 3 is the basic constitution figure of the inorganic acid liquid supply excretory system of a fuel cell stack used for the regeneration method of this example, it is (a) at the generating operation time, and (b) is a lineblock diagram at the time of the regeneration which used dilute sulfuric acid. In [as seen in a figure] the fuel cell stack 10 of this example, To the gas supplying pipelines which supply fuel gas to the anode gas feed hopper 12, via the diverter valve 18 the piping 20A for inorganic acid liquid supply, The piping 20B for inorganic acid liquid supply is connected with the gas supplying pipelines which supply oxidant gas to the cathode gas feed hopper 13 via the diverter valve 17, The piping 21B for inorganic acid liquid discharge is connected with the gas discharge piping in which the piping 21A for inorganic acid liquid discharge discharges the gas from the cathode gas outlet 15 via the diverter valve 18 again via the diverter valve 19 at the gas discharge piping which discharges the gas from the anode gas outlet 14.

[0014] In the polymer electrolyte fuel cell incorporating this fuel cell stack 10, So that drawing 3 (a) may see The piping 20A, the piping 20B, the piping 21A, The diverter valve 16, the diverter valve 17, the diverter valve 18, and the diverter valve 19 were set up stop circulation with the piping 21B, anode gas and cathode gas were supplied to the fuel cell stack 10, and the usual generating operation was performed. After continuing generating operation for a long time, operation of the polymer electrolyte fuel cell with which the battery characteristic fell was suspended. After it the diverter valve 16, the diverter valve 17, the diverter valve 18, and the diverter valve 19, After having switched so that drawing 3 (b) might see, having passed through dilute sulfuric acid anode gas feed hopper 12 from the piping 20A, and introducing from the piping 20B to the cathode gas feed hopper 13 and carrying out conduction of the fuel cell stack 10, it discharged from the piping 21A and the piping 21B, respectively. It continued, the conduction of dilute sulfuric acid was suspended, and it washed by carrying out conduction of the pure water in the same course as dilute sulfuric acid. Thus, after carrying out conduction of the dilute sulfuric acid, when the battery characteristic was measured, having recovered in the characteristic in early stages of operation was checked like the case of working example 2. It turns out that solid polyelectrolyte membrane was reproduced by the conduction of dilute sulfuric acid.

[0015] Although conduction of the dilute sulfuric acid is carried out and acid treatment is performed also in this example from the both sides of the anode gas feed hopper 12 and the cathode gas feed hopper 13. As working example 2 was described, from one of gas supplying ports, solid polyelectrolyte membrane is reproduced also as supplying dilute sulfuric acid, and a battery characteristic is recovered. In above-mentioned working example 1-3 both, it is easily guessed from the operation that the same effect is acquired even if it uses inorganic acid other than dilute sulfuric acid although dilute sulfuric acid is used for acid cleaning.

[0016]

[Effect of the Invention] As mentioned above, since [according to this invention] acid cleaning of the membrane electrode zygote of the polymer electrolyte fuel cell after (1) long-time operation is carried out, it became possible to replace again the positive ion accumulated to solid polyelectrolyte membrane by a proton, to reproduce it, and to reproduce effectively the polymer electrolyte fuel cell with which the battery characteristic fell to the cell provided with the predetermined battery characteristic, and the life of the cell improved.

[0017] (2) Since acid cleaning can be efficiently performed, without disassembling a stack if especially Claim 3 and also the method according to claim 4 are used, it is suitable as a regeneration method of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell.

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DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1]The characteristic figure showing the battery characteristic of the polymer
electrolyte fuel cell after carrying out acid treatment by the method of working example 1 as
compared with the battery characteristic before acid treatment implementation

[Drawing 2]The perspective view of a fuel cell stack showing the acid treatment method of
working example 2

[Drawing 3]In the basic constitution figure of the inorganic acid liquid supply expository system
of a fuel cell stack used for the regeneration method of working example 3, as for (a), (b) is a
lineblock diagram at the time of generating operation, and a lineblock diagram at the time of the
regeneration which used dilute sulfuric acid.

[Drawing 4]Drawing of longitudinal section showing typically the basic constitution of the single
cell of a polymer electrolyte fuel cell

[Description of Notations]

1 Membrane electrode zygote (MEA)

2 Solid polyelectrolyte membrane

3 Catalyst bed

4 Gas diffusion layer

5 Anode side separator

6 Cathode side separator

7 Fuel gas flow route

8 Oxidant gas passage

10 Fuel cell stack

12 Anode gas feed hopper

13 Cathode gas feed hopper

14 Anode gas outlet

15 Cathode gas outlet

16, 17, 18, 19 diverter valves

20A and 20B Piping (for inorganic acid liquid supply)

21A and 21B Piping (for inorganic acid liquid discharge)

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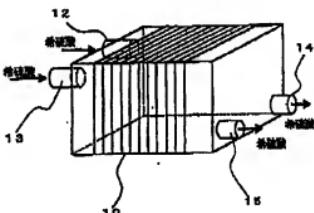
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(54) [発明の名称] 固体高分子電解質電池の再生方法

(57) [要約]

【発明】 固体高分子電解質膜への陽イオンの蓄積によつて電池特性が低下した固体高分子電解質型燃料電池を再生する。

【解決手段】 跳電運転を停止し、燃料電池スタック10のアノードガス供給口12とカソードガス供給口13より希硫酸を供給して内部のガス流路を通過させ、蓄積した陽イオンを再びプロトンへ置換させる。置換後、アノードガス供給口12とカソードガス供給口13より純水を供給して洗浄し、さらに空素ガスを供給して乾燥させる。



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【請求項1】 燃料電池スタックに組み込まれた膜電極複合体を離洗浄することによって長期運転によって低下した電池特性を回復させることを特徴とする固体高分子型燃料電池の再生方法。

【請求項2】燃料電池スタックを解体して取り出した電極接合体を無機酸液中に浸漬することによって酸電極接合体の酸洗浄を行うことを特徴とする請求項1に記載の固体高分子型燃料電池の再生方法。

【請求項3】固体高分子型燃焼電池の運転を停止し、また電池スタックへ燃料ガスを供給するアノードガス供給口と酸化剤ガスを供給するカソードガス供給口のうち、少なくともいずれかのガス供給口より無機酸素を供給して酸素結合体の酸洗浄を行うことを特徴とする請求項1に記載の固体高分子型燃焼電池の再生方法。

【請求項4】 燃料電池スタックのアーノードガス供給口より供給される燃料ガスを供給するガス供給配管とカソード供給口より供給される酸化剤ガスを供給するガス供給配管、弁を介して前記酸化剤ガス供給用配管を接続するとともに、アーノードからカソードへガスを供給するガス排出配管とカソードからガスを排出するガス排出配管に、弁を介して無機酸洗出用配管を接続し、前記の弁を切り換えて、無機酸洗出用配管の配管により導入した無機酸洗液をガス供給口より燃料電池スタックの内部へと導き、さらにガス排出配管より無機酸洗出用配管に接続して導いて外へ排出する方法を用いて酸電解液全体の洗浄洗浄を行うことを特徴とする請求項1に記載の酸電解液洗浄装置の市販化。

【発明の詳細な説明】
【0001】
【発明の属する技術分野】 本発明は、固体高分子型燃料電池の燃料電池の構成部品である電極接合体の

再生方法に関する。

【0002】
【従来の技術】図4は、固体高分子型燃料電池の単セルの基本構成を模式的に示す縦断面図である。固体高分子電解質膜2の両面に触媒層3を密着させて膜電極複合体(MEA)1を形成し、さらにその外側にガス扩散層4

を記し、アノード側セパレーター 5 とカソード側セパレーター 6 で接続して半セルが構成されている。本構成において、アノード側セパレーター 5 に蓄電された燃料ガス混合液 7 に水素を含むする燃料ガスを、またカソード側セパレーター 6 に蓄電された酸化剤ガス混合液 8 に酸素あるいは空気等の酸素ガスを流し、ガス抵抗層 4 を通過して酸電極接合体 1 に送ることによって電気化学反応による発電が行われる。

【0003】固体高分子型燃料電池では、固体高分子電解質膜2を飽和に含水させることによって、膜の抵抗値が小さくなり、膜はプロトトン導電性電解質膜として機能するので、固体高分子型燃料電池の発電効率を高く持続するためには、固体高分子電解質膜2に十分な水を含ま

せることが必要である。このため、燃料ガス流路7に流す燃料ガス、および／あるいは酸化剤ガス流路8に流す酸化剤ガスを外部またはセル内部に備えた加湿器によって加湿し、適当な水分を保持したガスを供給することによって固体高分子電解質膜2の導電性を維持する方法が開示されている。

[0004]

【光明が解決しようとする観點】このように固体高分子型燃料電池では、燃料ガス、およびあるいは酸化剤ガスを加圧して供給することによって固体高分子电解質膜の導電性を維持し、所定の電池特性を得ている。しかしながら、このように加圧器によってこれらの反応ガスを加圧して供給すると、加圧に用いる水中に溶ける履イオン、あるいは電極から溶出する履イオンが反応ガスとともに電極間接合部へと送られることになるので、運転時間の経過とともに徐々に固体高分子電池膜の導電性を担うプロトン基に置き換わり、電池特性が低下するという問題がある。

【0005】本発明は、このような固体高分子型燃焼電池の問題点を考慮してなされたもので、本発明の目的は、固体高分子電解質膜へ陽イオンが蓄積し、電池特性が低下した固体高分子燃焼電池を所定の電池特性を備えた電池へと効率的に再生させる再生方法を提供することにある。

[0006]

【課題を解決するための手段】上記の目的を達成するために、本分明においては、(1) 燃料電池スタックに組み込まれた膜電極接合体を離脱することによって長期逆転によって低下した電池特性を回復させることとし、(2) 例えば、燃料電池スタックを解体して膜電極接合体を取出す。

【0007】長期運転によって電池特性が低下した燃料電池スタックを、例えば上記(2)のごとく解体して、膜電極接合体を取り出し、無機酸液中に浸漬して酸洗浄

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を行えば、固体高分子電解質膜へ蓄積した陽イオンが再びプロトンにより置換されることとなる。したがって、このように洗浄した酸電極結合体を用いて燃料電池スタッツ構成すれば、所定の電池特性を有する固体高分子型燃料電池へと再生される。

【0008】また、上記(3)さらには上記の(4)のごとくとすれば、燃料ガスの流路、および/あるいは酸化剤ガスの流路を通して酸電極結合体へと無機酸液が流れ、固体高分子電解質膜へ導入した陽イオンが再びプロトンに置換されて再生される。これによって、固体高分子型燃料電池の電池特性を所定の特性へと回復することとなる。したがって、これらの方針を用いれば、燃料電池スタッツを解体することなく所定の電池特性を有する固体高分子型燃料電池へと再生できる。

【0009】

【実施の実施の形態】**実施例1** >長時間の発電運転によって電池特性の低下した固体高分子型燃料電池の燃料電池スタッツを解体して、留置された10個のセルの酸電極結合体をすべて取り出し、希硫酸液中に浸漬して酸処理を行った。酸処理を終了した酸電極結合体を純水で洗浄したち乾燥し、再び燃料電池スタッツと組み込み、当初の運転条件と同一条件で発電運転を行い電池特性を評価した。

【0010】図1は、酸処理実施後の固体高分子型燃料電池の電池特性を酸処理実施前の電池特性と比較して示した特性である。図中に●で示した特性Aは、疎開間の電池運転を行った際の最終的な特性であり、○で示した特性Bは、酸処理実施後の電池特性である。図から明らかなように特性Bは特性Aに比較して大幅な改善が見られる。この特性Bは固体高分子型燃料電池の当初の電池特性とほぼ同等であり、上記の酸処理によって当初の電池特性へほぼ回復したことわかる。

【0011】**実施例2** >長時間の発電運転により電池特性の低下した固体高分子型燃料電池の発電運転を停止し、図2に示したとく、燃料電池スタッツ10のアノードガス供給口12とカソードガス供給口13より希硫酸を供給し、燃料電池スタッツ10の内部のガス流路を逆流させたのち、それぞれアノードガス排出口14とカソードガス排出口15より排出した。続いて、同じくアノードガス供給口12とカソードガス供給口13より洗浄のための純水を注入し、内部のガス流路を逆流させたのち、それぞれアノードガス排出口14とカソードガス排出口15より排出した。続いて、同じくアノードガス供給口12およびカソードガス供給口13よりアノードガス排出口14およびカソードガス排出口15へと希硫酸ガスを逆流して乾燥させた。

【0012】上記のごとく希硫酸による酸処理、純水による洗浄、希硫酸ガスによる乾燥を行った固体高分子型燃料電池について、発電運転を行った結果によれば、実施例1の図1に示した特性と同様に、電池特性が処理を行

う前の特性より大幅に向かって、当初の電池特性とほぼ同等の特性が得られた。なお、本実施例においては、アノードガス供給口12とカソードガス供給口13の双方より希硫酸を逆流して酸処理を行っているが、いずれか一方のガス供給口より希硫酸を供給することとしても、希硫酸は試して固体高分子電解質膜へと到達するので、固体高分子電解質膜が再生され、電池特性は回復する。

【0013】**実施例3** >図3は、本実施例の再生方法に用いられた燃料電池スタッツの無機酸液供給排出系の基本構成図で、(a)は発電運転時の、また(b)は希硫酸を用いた再生処理時の構成図である。図に見られるように、本実施例の燃料電池スタッツ10においては、アノードガス供給口12へ燃料ガスを供給するガス供給配管に切り替え弁16を介して無機酸液供給用の配管20 Aが、また、カソードガス供給口13へ酸化剤ガスを供給するガス供給配管に切り替え弁17を介して無機酸液供給用の配管20 Bが連結されており、また、アノードガス排出口14からのガスを排出するガス排出配管に切り替え弁18を介して無機酸液排出用の配管21 Aが、また、カソードガス排出口15からのガスを排出するガス排出配管に切り替え弁19を介して無機酸液排出用の配管21 Bが連結されている。

【0014】この燃料電池スタッツ10を組み込んだ固体高分子型燃料電池において、図3(a)に見られるように、配管20 A、配管20 B、配管21 A、配管21 Bとの流路を閉止するように切り替え弁16、切り替え弁17、切り替え弁18、切り替え弁19を設定し、燃料電池スタッツ10にアノードガスとカソードガスを供給して通常の発電運転を行った。発電運転を長時間継続したのち電池特性の低下した固体高分子型燃料電池の運転を停止した。その後のち、切り替え弁16、切り替え弁17、切り替え弁18、切り替え弁19を、図3(b)に見られるごとく切り替えて、希硫酸を配管20 Aからアノードガス供給口12へ、また配管20 Bからカソードガス供給口13へと導入して燃料電池スタッツ10を逆流させたのち、それぞれ配管21 Aおよび配管21 Bから排出した。つづいて、希硫酸の逆流を停止し、希硫酸と同一経路で純水を逆流して洗浄を完了となった。このように希硫酸を逆流したのち電池特性を測定したことより、実施例2の場合と同様に、運転初期の特性に回復していることが確認された。希硫酸の逆流によって固体高分子電解質膜が再生されたことがわかる。

【0015】なお、本実施例においても、アノードガス供給口12とカソードガス供給口13の双方より希硫酸を逆流して酸処理を行っているが、実施例2において述べたごとく、いずれか一方のガス供給口より希硫酸を供給することとしても、固体高分子電解質膜が再生され、電池特性が回復する。また、上記の実施例1~3では、ともに洗浄に希硫酸を用いているが、希硫酸以外の無機酸

40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

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を用いても同様の効果が得られることは、その作用から容易に推測される。

【0016】

【発明の効果】上述のように、本発明によれば、(1)長時間運転後の固体高分子型燃料電池の膜電極複合体を酸洗することとしたので、固体高分子電解質膜へ蓄積した陽イオンが再びプロトンに置換されて再生され、電池特性が低下した固体高分子型燃料電池を所定の電池特性をもえた電池へと効率的に再生せざることが可能となり、電池の寿命が向上した。

【0017】(2)特に請求項3、さらには請求項4に記載の方法を用いれば、スタッカを解体することなく効率的に酸洗を行なうことができる、固体高分子型燃料電池の再生方法として好適である。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】実施例1の方法によって酸処理を実施した後の固体高分子型燃料電池の電池特性を推定実施前の電池特性と比較して示した特性図

【図2】実施例2の酸処理方法を示す燃料電池スタッカの斜視図

【図3】実施例3の再生方法に用いられた燃料電池スタッカの無機酸液供給排出系の基本構成図、(a)は充

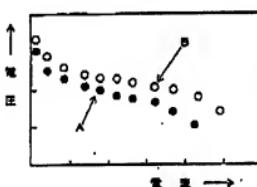
電運転時の構成図、(b)は希硫酸を用いた再生処理時の構成図

【図4】固体高分子型燃料電池の単セルの基本構成を模式的に示す概断面図

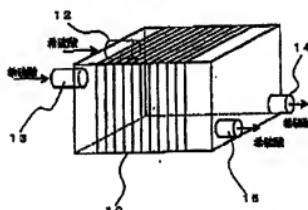
【符号の説明】

- 1 膜電極複合体 (MEA)
- 2 固体高分子電解質膜
- 3 燃料層
- 4 ガス拡散層
- 5 アノード側セパレータ
- 6 カソード側セパレータ
- 7 燃料ガス流路
- 8 酸化剤ガス流路
- 10 燃料電池スタッカ
- 12 アノードガス供給口
- 13 カソードガス供給口
- 14 アノードガス排出口
- 15 カソードガス排出口
- 16, 17, 18, 19 切り替え弁
- 20A, 20B 配管 (無機酸液供給用)
- 21A, 21B 配管 (無機酸液排出用)

【図1】



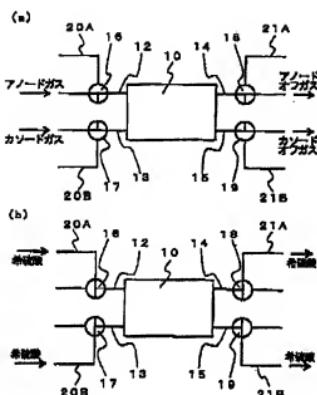
【図2】



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【図3】



【図4】

